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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we are grateful that You are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love.

Lord, we see a faint light at the end of a long dark tunnel. Thank You for lawmakers who understand that when everyone loses, America loses. We are grateful also for Senators who know that before they are Democrat, Republican or Independent, they are Americans. As they remember their accountability to You and to history, empower them to keep our Nation strong, staying true to their oath to defend our Constitution against external and internal foes. Lord, keep them from making any decision that will seem reckless in the sober light of hindsight.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

DEFAULT PREVENTION ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 211.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 211, S. 1569, a bill to ensure the complete and timely

payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following the remarks of the Republican leader and me the Senate will be in a period of morning business where Senators will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each—or at least be in a situation where people can speak up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. President, I am going to wait until Senator MCCONNELL gets to the floor, so I will not give any long remarks here. In fact, I won't give any long remarks at any time, but I do have a few things to say.

RECOGNITION OF THE SENATE CHAPLAIN

While we are waiting for Senator MCCONNELL, I want to take this opportunity to say this. Admiral Black has, for me, during this long period of crisis we have had in the country, been a voice of stability and a voice of inspiration. I am being very selfish in saying me, because it has been so for the entire Senate and for the country. His heartfelt prayers are so timely and so sensitive to the needs of our country and the need we all have to call upon our spirituality to get us through periods of difficulty.

I can speak for the entire Senate when I say how much we admire and respect this good man, who is a counselor and as much a leader in the Senate as anyone who serves in this body.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, the eyes of the world have been on Washington all this week—and that is a gross understatement—and while they witnessed a great deal of political dis-

cord, today they will also see Congress reach a historic bipartisan agreement and avoid a default on the Nation's bills.

The compromise we reached will provide our economy with the stability it desperately needs. It is never easy for two sides to reach consensus. Sometimes it is harder than others. This time it was really hard. After weeks spent facing off across a partisan divide that often seemed too wide to cross, our country came to the brink of disaster. But in the end, political adversaries set aside their differences and disagreements to prevent that disaster.

I thank the Republican leader for his diligent efforts to reach this important agreement. The Republican leader's cooperation was essential to reach an accord to pass both Chambers of Congress and also be signed by President Obama.

As part of our agreement, in order to ensure Congress continues the work of setting this country on a path of fiscal sustainability, this legislation instructs leaders to name conferees to a budget conference committee that will set our country on a long-term path to fiscal sustainability. I know some say that is going to be hard. What we do is hard here, and this is really hard, but I think we can get it done. The committee members selected must have open minds, be willing to exert every option no matter how painful to their own political ideas and even their own political parties. This conference committee, led by Chairman MURRAY and Chairman RYAN—which will produce its negotiated budget resolution in December—is the appropriate place to discuss our different views and the best way to chart a course for economic growth.

This legislation also funds the government through January 15 and averts default through February 7, during which time we can work toward a long-term budget agreement that prevents these frequent crises. Perhaps most importantly, this legislation ends a

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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